

LISTING OF CLAIMS**CLAIM 1 [Currently Amended]**

An apparatus for producing co-extruded pasta from pasta ingredients and filler comprises:

a pasta dough extruder for producing a pasta strand;

means for converting the pasta strand into a plurality of strands;

a plurality of co-extrusion die inserts positioned in a straight line for forming and filling the pasta strands; and,

a single crimp/cut die for [forming] crimping and cutting the filled pasta strands to form a predetermined pasta configuration.

CLAIM 2 [Original]

An apparatus for producing co-extruded pasta in accordance with Claim 1 further including:

a feed hopper having an input for receiving pasta ingredients and an output;

a mixer located at the hopper output for combining the ingredients into a mixture; and, wherein the extruder comprises

an auger screw coupled to the mixer for forming the mixture into a cylindrical strand of pasta dough.

CLAIM 3 [Original]

An apparatus for producing co-extruded pasta in accordance with Claim 2 wherein the means for converting the pasta strand into a plurality of strands comprises:

a first Y-manifold for dividing the dough strand from the extruder into two continuous strands of dough; and,

means for subdividing the two strands of dough into four continuous strands of dough.

CLAIM 4 [Original]

An apparatus for producing co-extruded pasta in accordance with Claim 1 further including:

a plurality of adjustable metering valves to adjust the flow of dough to the co-extrusion die inserts;

means for filling the co-extruded strands; and,

a conveyor receiving the formed and cut pasta from the single die.

CLAIM 5 [Original]

An apparatus for producing co-extruded pasta in accordance with Claim 4 further including:

a hot water cooker receiving the formed and filled pasta from the conveyor.

CLAIM 6 [Currently Amended]

An apparatus for producing co-extruded pasta in accordance with Claim 4 further including:

a filling means having an input to receive filling and an output;

an [eight] multi-column positive displacement pump coupled to the output of the filling means [,];

[each of said] a plurality of independent displacement pumps each corresponding to a column of the position displacement pump servicing a co-extrusion die insert, and including [eight] a plurality of flexible hoses of equal length each joining [each] a pump to a corresponding die insert.

CLAIM 7 [Original]

An apparatus for producing co-extruded pasta in accordance with Claim 6 further including:

the pump includes variable speed control to control the weight/volume of filling through the hoses.

CLAIM 8 [Original]

An apparatus for producing co-extruded pasta in accordance with Claim 4 further including:

a backing roller positioned adjacent the crimp/cut die between which the filled pasta dough strands drop vertically and are crimp-sealed and cut to length.

CLAIM 9 [Currently Amended]

[An apparatus] A method for producing co-extruded pasta in accordance with Claim [9] 10 wherein:

the pasta is rigatoni.

CLAIM 10 [Currently Amended]

A method for producing co-extruded pasta from pasta ingredients and a filler comprising:

feeding the pasta ingredients to a mixer;

mixing the ingredients and moving the mixture to an extruder;

extruding the mixture to form a cylindrical strand of pasta dough;
dividing the dough into a plurality of strands;
feeding and individually metering the [strand flow] plurality of strands to
a plurality of co-extrusion die inserts arranged in a straight line; and,
crimping and cutting the co-extruded filled pasta strands to form a
predetermined stuffed pasta configuration.

CLAIM 11 [Currently Amended]

A method for producing co-extruded pasta in accordance with Claim 10 further including the steps of:

providing a crimping/cutting die;
dropping the [strand flow] plurality of strands from the co-extrusion die inserts vertically downward through [a] crimping/cutting die to crimp/cut the pasta strands;
catching and conveying the crimped/cut pasta strands; and,
passing the pasta through a hot water cooker.

CLAIM 12 [Original]

A method for producing co-extruded pasta in accordance with Claim 10 wherein:
changing the crimping/cutting die to attain a different stuffed pasta configuration.